



County Executive
David Villanueva

Governmental Relations and
Legislative Officer
Elisia De Bord

County of Sacramento

Board of Supervisors
Phillip R. Serna, District 1
Patrick Kennedy, District 2
Rich Desmond, District 3
Sue Frost, District 4
Patrick Hume, District 5

May 24, 2024

Honorable Scott Wiener, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
1021 O Street, Suite 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Caroline Menjivar, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Sub. No. 3
1021 O Street, Suite 3720
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Corey Jackson, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Suite 6120
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Human Services Programs - Oppose May Revision Proposed Cuts in CalWORKs Program, Child Welfare Services, Adult Protective Services, In Home Support Services

Dear Chairs Wiener, Menjivar, Gabriel, and Jackson:

On behalf of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, I respectfully request that you oppose cuts to the human services programs as the Governor proposes in the May Revision. A balanced budget should not be at the detriment of children, families, and older adults in deep poverty, who are vulnerable, and are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The Administration proposed a total of over \$1.3 billion in budget cuts in human services programs and approximately \$850 million of that is ongoing. No human services program area is spared. The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Child Welfare Services, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), CalFresh, and Adult Protective Services (APS) programs, as well as housing programs, including Bringing Families Home, Home Safe, and the Housing and Disability Advocacy programs are all impacted.

Sacramento County strongly objects to the proposed cuts in CalWORKs, child welfare services, APS, and IHSS for these reasons:

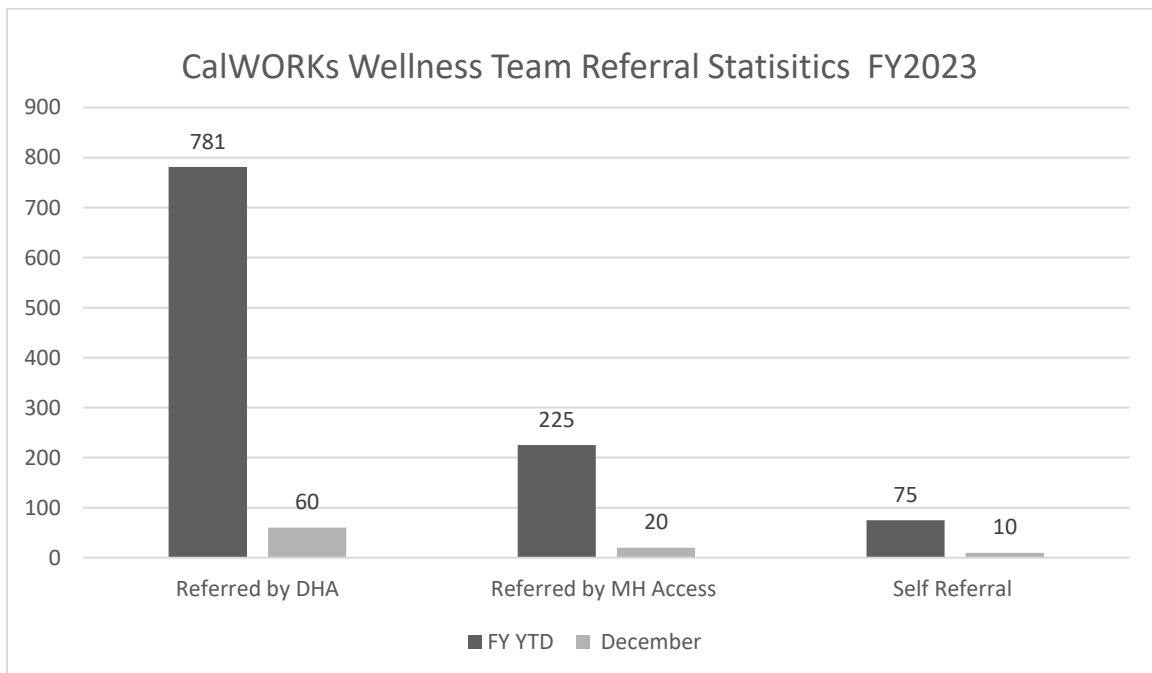
CalWORKs Single Allocation – We object to the proposed cuts to the Single Allocation totaling \$355.3 million in FY 2024-25, which is a 21.2% cut compared to 2023-24 amount. This cut will have a devastating impact on each component in the Single Allocation. The actual eligibility costs incurred by counties will be underfunded by over 50% under the May Revision proposal, a shortfall of over \$400 million. This means that counties will have to shift \$400 million from the employment services component of the Single Allocation to cover workload associated with state and federally mandated eligibility work to ensure customers receive timely access to CalWORKs benefits. This shift of funding from the employment services component to the eligibility component will in turn result in a reduction of over 50% of the funding available for employment services in FY 2024-25.

Overall, a cut this deep to the Single Allocation, especially when combined with the other approximately \$400 million in permanent cuts to CalWORKs services, including 1) the proposed elimination of the Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE), Family Stabilization (FS), and Work Incentive Nutritional Supplement (WINS) programs; 2) the proposed ongoing reduction to the Home Visiting Program; and 3) the proposed complete elimination of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse funding, will completely undermine counties' ability to provide services and support to CalWORKs families and meet performance outcomes. Statewide, we estimate over 1,700 CalWORKs positions would have to be held vacant or eliminated to absorb this cut to the Single Allocation. The elimination of these CalWORKs programs this fiscal year and annually ongoing sets families up for failure.

Value of Sacramento County's CalWORKs Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program assists CalWORKs customers in breaking barriers to employment by providing them with imperative behavioral health services through integrated and direct service referrals. Behavioral health services include mental health and substance use disorder assessments, individual therapy, group therapy, and case management provided by the Sacramento County Department of Health Services. The services provided by this funding assist the individual in determining a need for more intensive substance use disorder treatment. These services include detoxification, residential treatment, outpatient treatment, and referrals to transitional living/sober living environments.

The elimination of CalWORKs Mental Health and Substance Abuse program would negatively impact our most vulnerable population and hinder their journey to self-sufficiency. In FY 2023 alone, substance abuse services were provided to over 850 CalWORKs eligible customers. In the same FY, Sacramento County's Mental Health Program assisted with over 1,000 CalWORKs customer referrals to receive mental health services.



Value of Sacramento County’s CalWORKs Family Stabilization (FS) Program

The FS program effectively serves families on CalWORKs through intensive case management and services to those experiencing crises or who are unable to participate in Welfare-to-Work activities. Services include domestic violence services, behavioral health, education support, and housing support. The FS program also serves the children in the family and offers intentional service selection and family-centered case management. It also prevents CalWORKs families from getting involved in the child welfare system.

In Sacramento County, the FS program provided support to an average of 480 of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community annually. The elimination of the FS services will limit our CalWORKs customers’ access to housing, Welfare-to-Work benefits and other community resources. Specifically, the elimination of this program would halt Social Workers support to customers that need the Welfare-to-Work benefits. County Social Workers advocate on customers’ behalf to get them into shelters and permanent rentals, assisting with move-in costs and continual rental subsidy support. The FS program also provides aid by assisting with payments for licensing/schooling fees and vehicle repairs. The FS program also works on providing families with transportation for food, medical, and housing assistance. Since the start of COVID-19, the County has seen a steady increase in the number of domestic violence referrals to the program. The elimination of the FS program would take away intensive case management for our victims and their children, which can be detrimental to their survival and success in recovery.

Value of Sacramento County’s CalWORKs Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program

The ESE program may also be eliminated this fiscal year as previously stated. The CalWORKs ESE program offers CalWORKs customers Subsidized Employment placement, providing crucial training, skills, and experiences essential for securing and maintaining permanent employment. Many CalWORKs customers do not have any meaningful work experience or have low-skilled work experience.

In Sacramento County, the ESE program offered CalWORKs customers important job training skills to obtain meaningful employment opportunities. These services provide the ability to increase wage earnings and develop steady income, all of which lead to housing stability for them and their families. These positive results are a direct impact of the Retention Services provided by the ESE program. The Retention Services provided to the participant aim to remove barriers to employment, such as childcare, transportation to work, attendance, and time management guidance. The County also tracks positive trends regarding the increase in wages earned by the participant after the subsidies end. Below is an example of the wage increase in 2021 and 2022.

Year	Average Wage at 6 Months	Average Wage at 12 Months	% Increase
2021	\$16.46	\$17.14	4.2%
2022	\$18.32	\$19.74	7.8%

The County has a high success rate of customers after the program. In 2022-2023, 75.7% of customers were still employed and no longer received CalWORKs support. In 2021-2022, there was also a 70.4% success rate of customers employed and continuing to be off CalWORKs support. The ESE program assists customers who are “hard to serve” find employment that they may otherwise not find on their own. These are customers who are not able to find and keep

May 24, 2024

-4-

employment due to various reasons, such as having a criminal background, attendance, and time management issues. In addition, the customer is supported by Workforce Coordinators who provide retention services during the subsidy period. We currently have 18 Workforce Coordinators and three Workforce Career Assessment Supervisors. The elimination of ESE will impact our CalWORKs customers, CBO Providers, and our Direct Hire Employers. The elimination would stop a quality program in Sacramento County that has served over 1,400 customers.

Value of Sacramento County's CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP)

The CalWORKs HVP utilizes powerful, evidence-based home visiting models to promote family resilience and connection. These home visiting models help reduce stressors on the family and allow parents to focus on the developmental and behavioral needs of their child. The Child Abuse Prevention Center (CAPC) has implemented two evidenced-based models: Healthy Families of America (HFA), and Parent as Teachers (PAT). HFA performs screenings and assessments to determine families at risk for child maltreatment, and home visiting services for children until the child's fifth birthday. PAT performs personal visits, group connections, child screenings and provides a resource network to families with young children through entry into kindergarten.

The Sacramento County Department of Health Services Public Health also serves CalWORKs Home Visiting customers through implementation of the evidence-based model, Nurse Family Partnership (NFP). NFP provides public health nurse home visits to women during pregnancy to improve pregnancy outcomes and provide prenatal care. NFP also provides home visits during the first two years of a child's life to improve the child's health and development. In addition, NFP supports parents to develop skills that will allow them to better care for their children, continue their education and find gainful employment.

CAPC, which receives \$4.45 million in funding faces a significant challenge with a proposed reduction of \$2.3 million. This reduction will lead to a 53% decrease in staff, resulting in the loss of 23 full-time employees, decreasing the number of families served from 360 to 180 annually and the number of home visits from 2,700 to 1,350. Similarly, Sacramento County Department of Health Services Public Health is confronted with a potential cut of \$407,195 which will result in the loss of two Public Health Nurse positions, one Supervising Public Health Nurse position, and one Office Assistant position, decreasing the number of families served from 50 to 22.

These reductions pose serious implications for the programs and services aimed at supporting vulnerable children, pregnant women, and families in the community. Home visiting is a preventive measure that saves the lives of children by providing parents with education and tools to care for their children. Child abuse is predominant in the CalWORKs population and the proposed reductions will result in an increase in child maltreatment, neglect, and potential death.

Child Welfare Services – We strongly object to the cuts proposed in Caregiver Approvals and the FURS. The May Revision proposes to eliminate the entire funding of \$50 million GF for caregiver approvals beginning in FY 2024-25 and annually ongoing. This funding was finally implemented on an ongoing basis beginning in FY 2022-23 to support state-mandated case management activities to perform timely approval of relative caregivers through the RFA process. Caregiver approval requirements were enhanced and expanded for all counties and caregivers as part of the Continuum of Care Reform enacted in 2016. The one-time and eventually ongoing funding never fully funded the costs to counties of the new mandated workload, which is over \$100 million annually. County human services agencies have funded the difference from local realignment funding, even though they are not required to do so, because we recognize the

May 24, 2024

-5-

foundational importance of this work to the child welfare system. However, the loss of this \$50 million will eliminate funding for over 200 child welfare social workers statewide and will diminish county capacity to perform caregiver approvals. This proposed cut, along with the proposed elimination of the FURS program, undermines the foundation of our child welfare system and will remove vital services proven to stabilize youth and families. The cut to caregiver approvals in Sacramento County would drastically increase caseloads. Sacramento County RFA caseloads are already 27% higher than the recommended caseload to get assessments done timely. The result of these proposed cuts would increase caseloads to 66 (120% increase from the recommended caseload). This will increase our average time to approval to 257 days (8.5 months). Reduction of such a great proportion would increase caseloads 120% effectively ensuring caregivers would not be approved for at least 8 and a half months, well beyond the 90-day mandated timeframe. This would also be devastating for families who desperately want to care for their grandchildren, niece or nephew or family friend. This would add to the traumatization of children during an already difficult time in their lives. With the push to increase relative and non-relative extended family member placements for youth coming into care, reducing the number of staff who conduct these assessments and approvals would ensure that more kids will in fact not be with relatives and non-relative extended family member placements, and will instead be in Temporary Shelter Care Facilities for longer duration.

Adult Protective Services (APS) – We strongly oppose the May Revision proposal to significantly cut the APS expansion by \$40 million general fund (GF) beginning in FY 2024-25 and annually ongoing, reducing the annual funding amount from \$70 million GF to \$30 million GF. The APS program provides 24/7 response to reports of abuse and neglect for individuals over 60 and dependent adults ages 18-59. Since the implementation of the APS expansion, Sacramento County APS clients aged 60-64 have more than doubled from about 276 cases in 2021 to roughly 681 in 2023. The proposed cut will result in the immediate loss of 20% of our social worker staff who provide critical and often life-saving response and services to victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, leaving older and dependent adults more vulnerable to hospitalization, institutionalization in nursing homes and premature death. Expansion funding was used to build data and analytic capacity within APS and strengthened and broadened cross system community collaborations related to justice, family violence, food security, isolation, access to technology, utilization of public benefits, behavioral health, and general healthcare. Many of these would be eliminated or reduced.

The May Revision also proposes to eliminate all funding (\$4.8 million GF) associated with training of APS social workers beginning in FY 2024-25 and annually ongoing. The statewide training is essential in supporting our social worker staff to meet the needs of vulnerable older and dependent adults and supports consistent practices across counties. Our County relies on this training to provide core, standardized responses and services in alignment with national and statewide standards. APS social workers are required to complete intensive investigations, must coordinate with other professionals in their investigations and service delivery, and need to receive regular training to adopt to the ever-changing nature of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of older adults. Additionally, this training enables our Public Guardians to access mandated state training, allowing us to better coordinate our response to protect this population.

In Home Support Services (IHSS) - Sacramento County urges you to reject the proposed elimination of funds for IHSS. The Career Pathways program and the IHSS Back-Up Provider System are essential components of the Newsom Administration's commitment to increase options for affordable care at home, as is IHSS eligibility for all Medi-Cal beneficiaries regardless of citizenship status, which is also proposed for elimination. At a time when the direct care

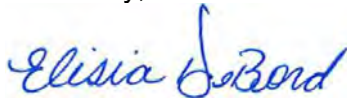
May 24, 2024

-6-

shortage is at crisis levels, these proposed eliminations will negatively impact individuals' choices for the least expensive and least restrictive care options when needed.

These programs protect people and help them become self-sufficient, less dependent on the system, and more equipped to properly care for families. Eliminating these programs is detrimental to our communities and state, especially in these dire times and considering the reality of their likelihood to become homeless. We urge the Legislature to safeguard our vulnerable families and reject these cuts. For these reasons, Sacramento County urges your support. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 874-4627 or deborde@saccounty.gov.

Sincerely,



Elisia De Bord
Governmental Relations and Legislative Officer

cc: Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Members, Assembly Budget and Fiscal Review
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Sacramento County Delegation
Chair and Members, Board of Supervisors
Audrey Ratajczak, Cruz Strategies
Missy Talbot, County Welfare Directors Association